

Service Learning Exposure in National Service Training Program: Implications to Civic Consciousness

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Abstract

The National Service Training Program (NSTP) is a civic education and defense preparedness program for students instituted by the Philippine government by virtue of Republic Act 9163, otherwise known as the NSTP Act of 2001. One of the aims of NSTP is to inculcate civic consciousness among Filipino youth through this program. However, as widely observed, not all students who completed NSTP have imbibed such aim. The quality of program implementation could be a potential factor which includes service learning exposure and how this is translated to students' sense of civic consciousness. Hence, this qualitative study aimed to analyze the service learning exposure of NSTP students in the first semester, academic year 2018-2019 enrolled in a private university. Anchored on Dewey and Freire's service-learning theory, service learning is a form of experiential education, deeply rooted in cognitive and developmental psychology, pragmatic philosophy, and democratic theory. Using a case study design, eight participants were purposively sampled and interviewed in a focus group. Consequently, interview data were transcribed and analyzed accordingly using Seidel's (1998) model. Findings show that participants described their service learning exposure as something that is practical, essential, fulfilling, and a spiritual calling. Based on these themes, implications for civic consciousness were drawn. These identified themes imply that service learning exposure seems to awaken one's awareness, sensitivity, and consciousness of the needs of others; thereby seeking out for ways to do something to contribute for the common good. This underpins the crucial role of NSTP program towards nation building. It is recommended that further enrichment of implementation be done to ensure sufficient service learning exposure identified to help raise the level of civic consciousness.

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